

## FORGIVENESS

A shirttail relative on  
Aunt Stacey's side, I never knew  
quite how that was  
    Ellsworth put on a rusty suit  
    and black string tie every  
    Sunday morning  
    and sat with a big Bible on his  
    scrawny knees  
    reading aloud  
    and preaching sermons to himself  
Only one unpardonable sin in  
    these United States  
    he figured out  
  
    and that's being dirt poor  
    folks will forgive anything else  
    everything but that

## JOHN'S FATHER

Mr. Conley wears plaid shirts  
winter or summer  
and chews tobacco, very neatly  
    Getting on in years  
Says, I've got cataracts  
but I read real good  
and I like to play them old records  
by the Carter family  
    No, I don't mean that June bug girl,  
    I'm talkin' about her mother,  
    that kind of music and singin'  
    really helps me pass the time